10. Participation of women in specified activities.

11. Population below poverty line and below double the poverty line.

(c) and (d) The request for the data made by the Ministry of Minority Affairs was discussed in the 2nd meeting of Steering Committee of National Sample Survey, held during 12-13 March 2007 (The committee is empowered to take all technical decisions in respect of subject, survey work from planning to release of results). The Committee observed that the data requested by the Ministry of Minority Affairs could be met from existing data collected during various NSS rounds by analysing them according to religious groups. The Committee also suggested that the Ministry of Minority Affairs might begin with the unit level data of 61st round (July 2004-June 2005) and get the data tabulated as per its requirement.

Enhancement of spectrum availability

*75. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has proposed to cap the number of telecom operators, prompted by the unavailability of spectrum;

(b) whether Government consider that such a move by TRAI would curtail competition in the telecom industry to the detriment of consumers; and

(c) the steps being taken to enhance spectrum availability to accommodate new players in the industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Defence Services are to release further spectrum for unimpeded growth of public mobile telecom services by shifting of certain Defence wireless links to alternate media like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC).

Silt along Ganga at Allahabad

*76. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that River Ganga at Allahabad has been depositing heavy silt along the bank on Allahabad side;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the main channel has swung away towards the low lands on Phaphamau side;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the main channel, as a result of tangential flow towards the left bank, is liable to cause colossal loss of property, cut off rail and road communication from across Ganga and cause long term damage; and

(d) if so, the steps Government have taken to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) As per the report of Ministry of Water Resources, a Technical Team comprising officers from Government of Uttar Pradesh, Ganga Flood Control Commission (Patna), Ministry of Railways and the Central Water Commission was constituted and visited the site in May, 2007 to study the matter relating to river Ganga changing its course at Allahabad. The Technical Team observed that river Ganga was shifting towards the Phaphamau side during the last few years. It was observed that about 1.5-2.0 kms. upstream of the road and railway bridges, some erosion has taken place.

The Team also observed that the approach to the road and railway bridges is quite protected as boulders placed there are dampening the river flow. The existing road leading to Phaphamau town constructed parallel to river Ganga is around 600 to 700 metres away from the river flow and provides protection to the town. To check the erosion and meandering of the river upstream of the bridges, some protection works were undertaken by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. At present, there is no danger to the road and railway bridges or Phaphamau town from tangential flow.

The Team has recommended the need for (i) close monitoring of the flow pattern of the river during the current monsoon season, (ii) conducting a model study on the behavior of the river in the vicinity of the bridges, and (iii) carrying out morphological studies with remote sensing techniques within the 20 kms. reach of the river (10 kms. upstream and downstream of the bridges) by the State Government. The Ministry of Water Resources has already suggested to the Government of Uttar Pradesh to undertake the required studies and remedial measures.

Indo-China visa regime

*77. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to liberalize Indo-China visa regime to enhance strategic cooperation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether both the countries propose to work out a number of initiatives to boost tourism between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) During the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to India in November 2006, the two countries agreed to a ten-pronged strategy to upgrade India-China relations to a qualitatively new level. The India-China Joint Declaration stated, "With a view to vigorously promoting tourism between India and China, the two sides shall organise the "India-China Year of Friendship Through Tourism" in 2007 with a joint logo and take other initiatives, such as opening of the office of the China National Tourism Administration in India and an Indian Tourism Office in China, improved air connectivity, and continued liberalisation of the visa regime." On February 14,2007,